

QC opens new bike lanes

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The **Quezon City government** inaugurated yesterday new and improved bike lanes along major thoroughfares as part of efforts to promote active, sustainable and environment-friendly modes of transportation for residents and workers.



Quezon City **Mayor Joy Belmonte**, **Vice Mayor Gian Sotto** and Metro Manila Development Authority Chairman Benhur Abalos led the launch of the QCikleta bike lanes, which were established to promote cycling and ensure the safety of bikers and other active transport users in the city.

Belmonte said the project is in line with their commitment to make Quezon City “a bike-friendly city where bikers can reach their destination safely and quickly.”

Transport Assistant Secretary Mark Steven Pastor and Quezon City District 2 **councilor Mikey Belmonte**, who authored the city’s Safe Cycling and Active Transport Ordinance, also joined the event along with other local officials.

The officials joined bikers from various organizations in a ceremonial biking activity using some of the new bike lanes, including those along Elliptical Road, Quezon Avenue, Agham Road and BIR Road.

Last year, the city government announced its plan to expand its existing bike lanes from an existing 55 kilometers to 161 kilometers throughout the city.

“We are working double time on this project so that the increasing number of bikers in our city will be able to travel safely without other vehicles running over their lanes,” the mayor said, stressing that it is the one of the city’s priority projects.

“This was a priority for us even before COVID-19 happened as part of our global commitment to reducing air pollution by 2030. But due to the pressing need for transport during the pandemic, and the bike culture that emerged as a result of this, we are fast-tracking its implementation,” she added.

The first phase of the project involved the improvement of existing bike lanes and identification of new routes to improve connectivity and increase the network to 93 kilometers. The second phase will add an additional 81.7 kilometers to provide bikers and other active transport users access to more parts of the city.

The city previously identified major issues facing bikers, such as lack of separators in bike lanes, poor bike lane visibility for drivers, rampant vehicle parking and lack of signage. In December, Belmonte signed the Safe Cycling and Active Transport Ordinance that institutionalizes the city government’s support for alternative forms of transportation.

It recognized the importance of supporting active transport solutions to reduce carbon emissions, address scarcity and ensure equality in allocating urban road space; promote a shift to safe, cost-effective, non-congestive and non-polluting active transport and increase mobility options for the general public.

The ordinance established the Bicycle and Active Transport Section under the Green Office Transport of the city’s **Department of Public Order and Safety (DPOS)** to ensure the implementation of the provisions of the measure, including the preparation of infrastructure plans for safe cycling and active transport.

It also mandates the identification and establishment of a cycling lane network and walking paths in the city, as well as the establishment of “end-of-trip” facilities such as safe bicycle parking areas, shower facilities and hydration areas for cyclists.

Councilor Belmonte expressed gratitude to the mayor for supporting the initiative, stressing the importance of having alternative means of transportation, especially during the pandemic.

He underscored the need to provide support to the majority of Filipinos who face difficulties in mobility, citing a study from the Japan International Cooperation Agency showing that only 12 percent of residents in Greater Metro Manila have their own vehicles.

“Any policy and program that will give the 88 percent alternatives is a step in the right direction,” he said in Filipino.

Voluntary registration

Aside from the inauguration of the new bike lanes, the city also launched the voluntary bike registration program that is also mandated in the Safe Cycling and Active Transport Ordinance.

DPOS head Elmo San Diego said that this program will help bikers locate their bikes in case of loss or theft and assist them in the event of an accident.

“The importance of this bike registration program is to help our bikers in case their bicycles cannot be located or are stolen,” he said.

“We can aid them and they can avail of the assistance of the police in investigating missing bikes because the owners can readily present a certificate of ownership issued by DPOS,” he added.

Mayor Belmonte encouraged bicycle riding groups and other active transport users to register their bikes through the program.

“As an advocate of active transportation, I encourage bikers and bike riding groups to register their bicycles through this program for us to be able to assist them and ensure their safety,” she said.

“I hope that through this bike registration program, more residents will be inspired to take alternative transportation because they can be assured of their safety and security here in Quezon City,” the mayor added.

Bikers or active transport users may register at the DPOS Green Transport Office at the city hall compound.

Requirements include a government-issued identification card, 2x2 photo, proof of purchase of the bike, electric bike or scooter; a picture of the owner with the bike, e-bike or e-scooter; and a registration fee of P150. A sticker will be issued for identification purposes.